

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/ME

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

BRIEFING MEMORANDUM

S/S

REVIEWED BY \_\_\_\_\_

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TO: The Secretary

FROM: ARA - Viron P. Vaky

Our Assistance to Codel Ryan

Beginning September 15, the Department and Embassy Georgetown have actively assisted the Codel in its preparations for the trip to Guyana. From October 15 ARA/CAR had almost daily contact with staff members particularly Congressman Ryan's legal counsel, Ms. Speiers, in planning and coordinating the visit. The Codel was apprised of formidable logistic problems that would confront the group because of the remote location of the community. Numerous discussions were held concerning the structure of the organization and past alleged illegal activities of the Temple. The possibility that the Temple would be suspicious of the purposes of the visit and might refuse the Codel entry into their agricultural community was also reviewed.

Moreover the Codel was informed that should they be refused admittance, the GOG would be reluctant to pressure the Temple to admit the party on the grounds that they have a right to their privacy if they are not in violation of local law. Department legal officers also briefed Codel staff members on the parameters of Embassy authority over private Americans in a foreign country.

The subject of violence was mentioned although not in the context of the possibility of an assault

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on the Codel but rather the alleged threats made by the Temple against defecting members.

Congressman Ryan had made considerable research into the Peoples Temple and appeared to be familiar with the charges of maltreatment. He indicated through his legal counsel to accept many of the recommendations made by the Department and the Embassy, including notifying the Peoples Temple of the purpose of the visit.

YOUR TALKING POINTS

-- Congressman Ryan first discussed the visit on September 15, with Assistant Secretary Vaky and members of his staff.

-- From this initial meeting, the Department was in close and frequent contact with the Congressman's staff in planning the visit.

-- In planning the visit, Department and Codel discussed reports of rumored maltreatment of Temple members and results of previous Embassy visits and inquiries at the agricultural community.

-- Department and Embassy Georgetown advised Codel of the formidable logistics problems due to the remote location of the townsite.

-- Department Officers informed Codel staff of possibility that Peoples Temple may view visit with suspicion and refuse Codel entry into agricultural community. The GOG would be reluctant to pressure the Temple in receiving group on grounds they have a right to their privacy if not in violation of local law.

-- Embassy Georgetown fully coordinated visit with GOG who provided logistical support for visit.

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